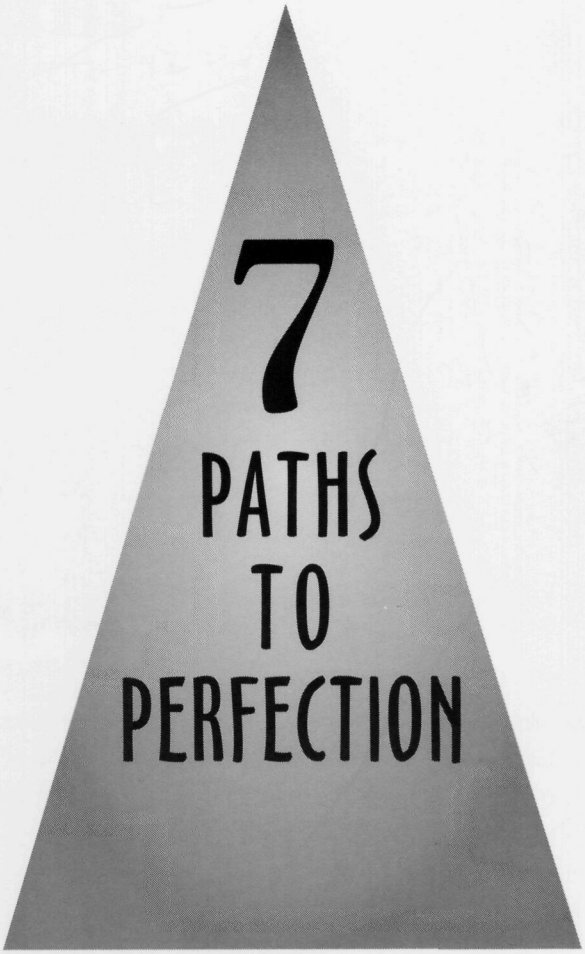

KIRPAL SINGH

SEVEN PATHS TO PERFECTION

Kirpal Singh

"Man's only duty is to be ever grateful to God for His innumerable gifts and blessings."

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(sample Diary Form, pgs. 10-11)

SEVEN PATHS TO PERFECTION

TO SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH

A tiny seed contains a mighty oak in its heart which can blossom into fullness by proper nourishment and protection. All young and tender saplings do need hand-watering, periodical weeding, fertilizing, and protective hedging against the stray wayside cattle so that the saplings are not harmed. In due course of time the tree grows into full maturity, providing shade and shelter to the wayside travellers and becoming a source of help and inspiration to others.

Exactly in the same manner, the Holy Seed of Initiation thrives best in a rich and fertile soil formed of high ethical values and loving compassion. A divine stir by the Living Master of the soul in man is a happy start for the long spiritual journey ahead. Therefore, Seekers, are being advised to do self-introspection which helps in developing fertility and in germinating the divinity to full bloom. The seven basic requisites enumerated in the prescribed self-introspective diary* aid immeasurably in covering the entire field of ethics, and help a lot to invoke the Divine Mercy. All these are discussed briefly in the following pages under different headings.

Kirpal Singh

*See "innermost spread" for a sample suggestion (front and back) of a self-introspection diary sheet. This may be enlarged and printed in quantity for the benefit of the interested seeker.

"Truth is higher than everything but higher still is true living. Truth and true living are not exclusive of each other but go together; one supplements the other and their combination forms the God-like life. One who practices true living will always earn his living by the sweat of his brow and feed himself and his family on rightly procured foods consisting of fruits, vegetables, nuts, cereals and permitted dairy products. Furthermore, he will be honest and aboveboard in his dealings with others."

TRUTHFULNESS

God is Truth and Truth is God. A truthful person always works in the Light of God. He has nothing to fear in the world. Ever clothed in the Divine Light, he works and bears himself in Godly simplicity, for God is his sheet-anchor and a haven of refuge. Don't tell lies. If you do so, you deceive yourself first and then others; moreover, you have to tell many more lies to cover your one lie. One should therefore follow the motto, *"Be true to your own self- don't deceive yourself."* If one is true to his own self, he is to fear none, *"for he is true to God in him, Who is in all hearts."* He would, therefore, speak truth, think truth, and deal in truth, for he is aware of the divine help at every step. Adversity cannot deter him, misfortune cannot betray him, and opposition cannot waylay him, because the gracious God-Power is his shield and help and comes to his aid anywhere and everywhere. Such a heart becomes an abode of all other virtues, which follow of their own to find sympathetic co-operation.

Truth does not mean simply speaking truth and thinking truth, but it is a righteous mode of life. *"Truth is above all, but higher still is true living."* Our actions should be exemplary so that they show and denote that we belong to a noble school of thought based on Truth, Piety, and Love. A tree is known by the fruit it bears. The divine tree of Spirituality needs to be nourished with the waters of Ahimsa and Truthfulness.

"Truth," says Kabir, *"is the highest of all virtues, while falsehood is the vilest of vices."* The Truth of truths resides in the innermost recesses of the human soul and needs to be dug out, unearthed and freely practiced in all our dealings. The True Sound-Principle is the Source of all life, and it is only by contacting It on the Divine Ground that we become truly Truthful and our life can be molded on the pattern of Truth. By practicing Truth and living in Truth, one gets clothed in the Love of the Lord and freely extends Love to all and sundry.

In all the four ages, because He incarnated in all four ages, Kabir preached of the Sound-Principle. It is through day-to-day contact with This that one purifies one's life and makes one's self a fit receptacle for the Divine grace.

AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

Ahimsa is an ennobling virtue that brings each one to par with his or her fellow beings, and ultimately leads to the princi-

ple of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God* The cultivation of this virtue demands a broad development of toleration towards all, irrespective of their shortcomings and failures. To radiate the grand principle of the Family of Man on the divine ground of loving and compassionate desire for the well-being of all costs very little but counts very much. A heart full of divine compassion is the abode of all virtues.

A close review of the problem would show that ordinarily we are neither worried nor irritated when everything goes in accordance with our wishes. No sooner do we fancy that our interests are thwarted or our feelings are injured than a chain of reactions starts, resulting in violence in thought, word, and deed, according to one's physical, mental, or moral make-up. Many of us consider it our legitimate duty to repay the real or supposed insult in the same coin, and very few would consider it a virtue to forego, forgive, and forget.

Jesus always preached the two cardinal virtues: (1) *"Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself and (2)"Love Thine Enemies."* Does that mean that it is out of timidity or weakness that one should love and forbear one's enemies? No, there is something moral and divine that lies at the root of such an attitude.

The place where fire burns becomes heated first and then transmits its heat to the atmosphere around. So is the case with the fire of anger. An imagined or supposed wrong keeps rankling in the mind like a thorn. When one cannot bear its intensity, one bursts forth into flames of hatred and contempt (begins abusing right and left), loses his balance of mind, and like a canker keeps emitting a malign odor that virtually goes on polluting the atmosphere around. Most of our injuries and wrongs are the outcome of our own process of thinking, and such thoughts breed countless others, multiplying in geometrical proportion. We can get out of this vicious cycle only by changing our attitude towards life. Why sacrifice our natural equanimity for mere trifles, for passing bubbles and vapory nothings that are things of no consequence? Instead of brooding over these supposed and imagined wrongs, it would be better by far to contemplate on the higher aspects of life, the divinity within and the divinity without, for this world is verily of the Divine and Divinity resides therein.

*The term "violence." as used here, goes beyond physical harm and destruction. It includes hurting the feeling of others by thought, word and deed. And it includes transgressing or usurping the rights of others; not only their social rights but their spiritual rights as well.

If we really wish for God and aspire to attain to the Godhead, we must learn to love His creation, for God is nothing but Love. St. John has emphatically proclaimed, *"He that Loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love," saith* Kabir, *"The soul in man is of the same Essence as of God."* This being the case, we must try to live in our natural habitat of love and all that is and belongs to love, for love beautifies everything within and without. We live because of the Love of God which is but a Life-Principle. Love, Life and Light are synonymous. The whole creation is the manifestation of His Love and God verily dwelleth in it. Again, it is said that the entire creation has sprung from Light and none need, therefore, be dubbed as "Good" or "Bad."Intrinsically, all of us have our roots deeply embedded in the Light and Love of God, though we may not be aware of It because we seldom get an opportunity to peep inward, and have not the least idea of what lies within the real Essence of essences, the Source of all life, which is the Love and Light of God. If we only knew this and practiced it in our workaday life, we could not but live within the Love of Him by whose Love we live and all life exists. ***AHIMSA*** (Non-violence), then, is the practical aspect of the Divine Life, and a Fruit that grows on the Tree of Life.

CHASTITY

Chastity is life and indulgence is death. Continence is a virtue to be observed for success in all the spheres of life, be they mundane or spiritual. A clean and chaste life is a fertile soil wherein the Holy Seed of Spirituality thrives the best. It consists of restraint in thought, word and deed, as in each case the poison is injected into the depths of the mind and multiplies with accumulated impurities of countless ages.

To cultivate chastity is an uphill task that requires a long-drawn struggle through life — something very strenuous indeed. Fortunate are those who practice celibacy because they are in a far better position to follow the Path Godwards than those who are wallowing in the miserable mire of self-indulgence. A normal, temperate married life as enjoined by the scriptures is, however, no bar to spirituality.

An analysis of the facts of life will show that normally much depends upon our environment and mode of living. Diet plays an important part in the build-up of our mental thinking. The food we take, when assimilated in the system, colors our life impulses in its own color. The very bones and blood get dyed in

the color of the food we take. Adulterated or dead foods cannot be the source of Life. This is why the Masters on the Path of Spirituality always insist on complete abstinence from all meats, fish, fowl and eggs (both fertile and infertile), and from all alcoholic beverages or intoxicants and other opiates and stimulants, as one dulls the thinking faculty and the other flares up animal passions within, and renders one insensate to the higher impulses in life. *"As you think, so you become,"* is an age-old aphorism; and to it may be added, *"As is the food, so is the mind."*

A natural diet, comprising vegetables, fruits, nuts, butter, bread, and cheese, in moderate quantities, is highly nutritious for the health and strength necessary for carrying on the obligations of life, either earthly or spiritual.

An eminent physician says, *"We dig our graves in the kitchen, and more deeply with our teeth."* Moreover, closely connected with this problem is the far-reaching, inexorable Law of Karma, the Law of Cause and Effect, or of Action and Reaction. *"As you sow, so shall you reap"* is an adage too well known to need any comments. You cannot have roses out of tares. Everything in the world, or of the world, has to be paid for. Even our so-called "joys and pleasures" require a price. You cannot take away life without paying the penalty thereof. *"The wages of sin,"* said Christ, *"is death"* (Romans 6:23) and you can well decide for yourself if you are prepared to pay for it.

By the observance of Brahmcharya (celibacy), we not only preserve the vital fluid of life (semen, etc., which is rather an invaluable asset in the physical body and can in no way be underrated), but it positively helps one in attuning to the Divinity, Which is already woven into the very pattern of our life but is lost in the mighty swirl of the world. The lost strands of the Life-giving Threads — the Holy Light and the Audible Life Stream — as manifested by the Master, cannot be held for any length of time, unless we are firmly embedded in the life of chastity. A vacant mind is the devil's workshop, and hence constant repetition of the Charged Words and remembrance of the Master are counselled. These act as powerful aids and help in anchoring the mind and keeping it steadfast in the otherwise tumultuous sea of life. It should be clearly understood that no amount of intellectual attainments or sophisticated reasoning can stand by you in an hour of tortuous agony, except the gracious protection of the Master.

Again, ripe fruits retain their freshness so long as they remain on the branches, but when once plucked can only be

preserved either in honey or in some high-grade refrigerators. The personal aura of the Master is the embalming honey and His loving protection, the invaluable cold storage, where one may find hope for liberation from this ancient malady. The lives which were dedicated to the Holy Cause of God have left behind records of their precious experiences which show in abundance that there is hope for everybody, provided one is earnest in his or her endeavors, and provided above all, that there is proper guidance and help from a truly competent Master-soul.

As every Saint has a past so has every sinner a future, but nothing can be accomplished without the grace of the Master-Power overhead. The child-disciple has, of course, to keep himself busy and occupied in something useful, or at least in repeating the Sacred Charged Names mentally, shunning bad company and uncongenial environments — like the study of obscene literature and art — and by avoiding looking into the eyes of others, particularly of the opposite sex, and in strictly taking a vegetarian diet, conservatively cooked, and in strict moderation. These are some of the helping factors which, if pursued steadfastly, can bring in sure results in due course of time, with the grace of the Master-Power overhead.

Here it may be necessary to say a few words about Brahmcharya. Literally speaking, it means the path (the practical path of one's conduct) leading to Brahman or God. It consists in controlling all the senses and channelling them in the right direction. In other words, Brahmcharya makes a life of continence, temperance and self-restraint, including a total abstinence from all kinds of unwholesome foods and drinks. A life like this is a *sine qua non,* or a necessity, for the (inner) Path Godwards or Brahman-wards; and aspirants are well advised to follow it scrupulously.

LOVING HUMILITY

Humility is an ornament of the Saints. It exalts Them in the eyes of both man and God. A genuine Master-Saint sees the Light of God in every living being, and hence no wonder He meets the child-disciple on a level of equality and treats him or her as His very own.

As a fruitful branch hangs low with the weight of its own fruit, so does the Master, with the weight of the Divine Treasures within Him, lovingly meets all and sundry, irrespective of any social and religious considerations, who come to Him to par-

SELF-INTROSPECTION DIARY FORM

NAME: _____ (FIRST / LAST) Month of _____ ,19

ADDRESS: _____ (STREET / CITY / STATE / ZIP / COUNTRY) INITIATED: _____ ,19 (MONTH / DAY)

OBSERVANCE (Number of Failures)		DAY OF MONTH															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
AHIMSA (non-violence)	Thought																
	Word																
	Deed																
TRUTHFULNESS	Falsehood																
	Deceit																
	Hypocrisy																
CHASTITY	Thought																
	Word																
	Deed																
HUMILITY	Pride of Wealth																
	Vanity of Knowledge																
	Intoxication of Power																
DIET	Wrong Food																
	Drugs																
	Alcohol																
SELFLESS SERVICE	Physical																
	Financial																
MEDITATION (Hours)	Simran (Watching)																
	Bhajan (Holy Sound)																
Meditation Totals																	

take of His Riches and to tread the Path to the eternal Home of the Father.

"Service before Self is a rare gift. When the same "Self operates *in* every living creature, one ought to delight in service for its own sake. "Self and "Service" are but two aspects of the Divinity. This understanding of the shared nature of the universe, despite its apparently multi-colored designs and patterns, brings about an attitude of equipoise which, in turn, gradually leads to serenity and sublimity; and one gets engaged in the service of all, and begins to see the corresponding self-same Enlivening Principle working in all creation.

Just as a smallest cog is indispensable in a vast mechanism and serves a useful purpose, similarly all creatures and creation are beautiful and full of divine manifestation, serving a purpose under His Will. Such an idea strengthens the silken bonds of loving brotherhood, and wins the pleasure of the Lord and the Master.

A sweet tongue imbued with humility,
O Nanak! is the essence of all virtues.

St. Augustine laid great emphasis on the virtue of humility. *"Humility first, Humility last, and Humility throughout"* was the supreme theme that he had to give to his audience when he rose to give his convocation address to students. Beyond this, he said, he had nothing more to give them. Similarly, Kabir once declared that He lived in low humility just as a fish lived in water; for this exalted man to the status of the Devas or gods.

Humility is the only virtue that allows a person to enter the Court of the Saints. For the advent of the Beloved, one has to empty out his very own self from within, and then live in Him all the time. Once, Kabir said, he went out in search of a wicked person, but could find no one in the wide, wide world; and, at last, when he peeped within himself, he saw that he was the wickedest of the wicked. *This* is the acme of humility.

Kabir also said, *"I am the lowest as compared with all others, and all are better than myself. Those who see that way are my friends."* Nanak always spoke of Himself as "lowly Nanak," "poor Nanak," "Nanak the slave," "Nanak the bondman."

Guru Amardas always prayed to God that He should make Him "the slave of His slaves." My Master (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj) once said that He would like to make shoes out of His skin for the feet of His devotees.

False pride of worldly possessions or pelf, assumed superiority because of spiritual knowledge or intellectual attainments, vanity of earthly things and status, may turn astray the mind of the spiritual aspirant; yet, in course of time, all these vanish into thin air. On the other hand, a heart full of reverential humility is a fit receptacle for His grace; a receptacle, which when filled to overflowing, runneth over on its own to others. For a humble person, no sacrifice is too great in the large interests of spiritual development, whereas a proud person would endlessly wait and even miss the chance when offered.

Time and tide wait for no man. Human birth is a priceless asset granted by Providence in the ascending scale of evolution and its highest object is spiritual perfection, for which all of us are here. Fortunate are those who are spotted, singled out, and Initiated into the Mysteries of the Beyond, and are linked with the Divine Attributes of Holy Light and Celestial Sound. It is now up to us to *"make hay while the sun shines."* If we take but one step forward. He will come a million steps to receive and greet us.

The very idea of attaining spiritual perfection is a happy augury and a happy prelude to the greatest venture in one's life. It is the Divine Mercy which, when stirred, brings about such a sublime thought.

This grand Mystery of Life cannot be resolved by intellectual attainments or by sophisticated reasoning which may bring in knowledge but not wisdom, and which also may induce that pride of learning and leadership making it all the more difficult to enter the Kingdom of God. The crown of all understanding is to realize our present state of Self-complacency and the abject misery in which we are unwillingly caught and feel helpless to escape. A closer view of things will reveal that the soul is enshrouded with thick veils of ignorance and is being driven hopelessly in endless gyres up and down on the giant Wheel of Creation.

SELFLESS SERVICE

Man is a three-fold entity, comprising body, mind, and soul; and it behooves one to be of service to his fellow beings in all of the three spheres. *"By Love serve one another,"* is the exhortation of St. Paul. A Persian text says, *"**Service exalteth** the server."*

"Selfless Service" is said to be a great virtue and a reward in itself. It is the central theme of the sacred teachings of the Masters. The Living Master is an embodiment of selfless service. He always rushes to the aid of his loving Children all the world over, caring little for His physical comfort. It is the Divine Law which He reveals and fulfills in His own person. Out of sheer compassion for His brethren, He serves all to redeem them from the "Great Wheel" by inverting their attention within and by linking them with the saving Life-Lines.

The more one serves, the more one's self expands and, in course of time, goes out to embrace the entire creation. We must, therefore, take upon us the task of bringing the Master's message to every nook and corner, so that people may know of the wonderful opportunity that is theirs and avail themselves of it as best as they can.

Again, selfless service may assume different forms according to one's means and capacity. Some may like to attend the needy, the poor, the down-trodden people, or the sick and the disabled by lending a helping hand in their distress.

If you attend a sick person or stand by an afflicted one, you serve the Divine Cause. Certainly you do not and cannot take away the sickness or affliction, but surely you can help in assuaging the sufferings by your kindly words and deeds. Every sweet word uttered or helping hand extended to those in distress goes a long way in purifying the mind and the body. A loving heart is a fit receptacle for the Divine grace, for God is Love. *"He who knows not Love cannot know God, for God is Love," says* St. John. Love knows no barriers and no class distinctions. Love flows equally and freely towards all, transcending all impediments.

Again, a rich person with a loving heart would wish to share his riches with the indigent or the needy, and spend his money in charitable and philanthropic purposes.

The system of tithe has been prevalent in practically all of the established religions of the world, and it has a deep significance because tithe-paying shows how honest a man is, and his offerings show how liberal he is. From the old records, it appears that all of the countries in the East, from Egypt to Afghanistan, and all of the Christian world were following the system of paying one-tenth of their earnings for the good of the people at large. Among the Muslims, there is an institution of "Zakat" which requires every person to set apart, every year,

one-fortieth of his possessions for charity. Among the Hindus and Sikhs, this system goes by the name of "Daswand" which is an equivalent for tithe.

The Master, however, has extended it further (apart from one's monetary earnings) to the dedication of time for meditation, as well — viz., about two and one-half hours out of twenty four. The Masters further enjoin, *"Be in tune with God, and share your earnings with all of the others in need."* Kabir said, *"By giving away money, it will not be lessened. Ifyou are not satisfied, you may try it for your own self."*

But offerings should be free and voluntary, and should not be inspired by any thought of reward, or be the outcome of impositions from without; for then instead of being a source of liberation, they become the source of bondage. Again, charity should not be misplaced, but it should be given to alleviate the sufferings of the distressed in the world. In fact, the All-Knowing Master is the best judge, for He knows how best to utilize the subscriptions coming from His disciples and puts them to a really useful purpose.

One must be extra discriminative and vigilant enough, lest by the misuse of his hard-earned money, one may be contracting more Karmic debts, instead of liquidating the existing ones; for every action, howsoever good, has a reaction and leads to bondage. This may be bondage with golden fetters, as Lord Krishna pointed out to the warrior Prince Arjuna, when He said that all deeds, whether good or bad, have an equally binding efficacy; and chains forged by them may be of gold or iron. St. Ignatius of Loyola tells us, *"The seeds of sanctity and sin are already within us."* It all depends upon which of these we choose to cultivate in the garden of our soul.

DIET

As already discussed under the caption of CHASTITY, diet plays an important and integral part in the life of a spiritual aspirant and, as such, should be given its due importance. All prohibited foods and drinks should be scrupulously eschewed, even in the face of medical advice, as none of these can lengthen the scheduled life-span nor are they, in fact, conducive to nourishment. It is certainly a wrong notion that flesh or eggs give extra vigor or strength; on the contrary, these things flare up the carnal appetites which, in the long run, result in gross dissipation of energy.

It is gratifying to learn that the people, all the world over, are gradually coming to realize the benefits of the vegetarian diet; and the leaders of this thought have taken upon themselves the duty of propagating its importance among the masses. So far, the world has witnessed no less than fourteen Conferences held in different parts. India, too, had the good fortune to hold one in the year 1957, when representatives from different countries of the world gathered together to exchange their views in the time-honored and historic capital — Delhi.

An advanced section of public opinion has, of late, begun to lay greater stress on what they call ***"vegetable-ism"*** as distinct from "vegetarianism." If we, for instance, look at goats, horses, bulls and elephants, we find how healthy and strong they are; so much so, that in all mechanical terminology, we calculate the load-capacity in terms of "horse-power".

St. Paul in his Epistles to the Corinthians (1:6:13) *"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them."*

Again, "It *is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy (spiritual) brother stumbleth."* (Romans 14:21)

"And God said, 7 have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree-yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." (Genesis 1:29)

From "The Gospel of the Holy Twelve":

"Therefore ye shall eat no flesh, nor drink strong drink; for the child shall be consecrated to God from his mother's womb, and neither flesh nor strong drink shall be taken, nor shall razor touch his head." Now Mary and Joseph, His parents, went up to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover, and observed the feast after the manner of their brethren who abstained from bloodshed and the eating of flesh and from strong drink.

" . . . and eat not that which is set before you. That which is gotten by the taking of life, touch not for it is not lawful to you. . . . The son of Man is not come to destroy but to save, not to take life, but to give Life to body and soul."

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Spiritual practices form an essential part in the spiritual aspirant's life, and should, therefore.be a daily "must". The repetition *("simran" of* the five Sacred Charged Names mentally, with the tongue of thought, which were conveyed orally at the time of Holy Initiation) is not a difficult task, and it carries a deep meaning. Although it looks so simple and easy at the outset, in order to acquire proficiency in it, one needs extra love and fortitude. You will appreciate that the Holy Names carry the Life-Impulse of the Master, Which works wonders in withdrawing the sensory currents from the body level up to the eye-focus, thus preparing the soul for the eventual inner Journey on to the Regions of bliss and harmony.

Certain hours for meditation should, therefore, be fixed, set apart, and pursued regularly and earnestly; for each such repast brings in Nourishment to the soul, and one is led within to the Divine Light which dispels the darkness of ignorance. It is like purifying the receptive vessel every day for receiving the Divine grace. Daily meditations clear the gross dross that one gets *at the sensuous level.*

The second important part of meditation *("bhajan")* is listening to the Holy Sound Current, the Audible Life-Stream, coming from the right side. It is equally an important aspect of the spiritual practices, and should not be ignored or lost sight of. After Initiation, it is the disciple's duty to enrich his spiritual experiences from day to day; and he can certainly extend his field with the grace of the Master to any length he may like, opening up new vistas of sublime glory and beatitude.

In short, self-introspection helps in cutting the branches and pruning all that is undesirable, while meditation (spiritual practices: *Simran* and *bhajan)* strikes at the very stem of the tree of worldly life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Considered by many people who met him in the East and in the West to have been a living example of a true Saint of Spirituality, Kirpal Singh was born in a rural setting in Sayyad Kasran in the Punjab (then in India, now in Pakistan) on February 6, 1894. He followed the career of a civil servant in the government of India, and retired on his own pension in 1946. Following instructions from his Master (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, 1858-1948), he founded and directed RUHANI SATSANG. He was Commissioned by God and authorized by his Master to carry forward the spiritual work of contacting sincere seekers after God with the WORD (or NAAM). He continued in that capacity until he left the earth plane on August 21, 1974. Elected four times, consecutively and unanimously, as President of the World Fellowship of Religions, he upheld the truth that, though the various religions are different schools of thought, the Aim of all religions is One and the Same. Kirpal Singh visited the major cities in the United States on the occasions of each of his three world tours: in 1955, in 1963-64, and again in 1972, staying in this country for three months or more, each time. From his intent study at the feet of Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj and from his own personal inner experiences of a spiritual nature, Kirpal Singh was eminently qualified to convey to sincere people everywhere the importance of self knowledge and God realization.

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